

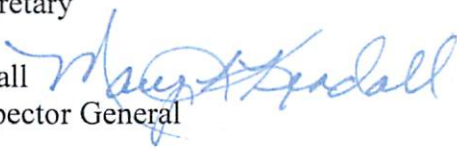


**OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL**
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Memorandum

NOV 21 2018

To: David Bernhardt
Deputy Secretary

From: Mary Kendall 
Deputy Inspector General

Subject: Report of Investigation – Alleged Preferential Treatment in Grand Staircase-
Escalante National Monument Boundary Decision
Case No. OI-PI-18-0608-I

We have completed an investigation into the process for revising the boundaries of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM), outside Kanab, UT, including whether U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) employees modified the GSENM's boundaries at least in part for the personal financial benefit of former Utah State Representative Michael Noel. Noel, currently the executive director of the Kane County Water Conservancy District, owned property within the GSENM that was excluded as a result of the modifications.

Our investigation found that while the DOI had no formal process already in place for modifying the boundaries of national monuments, DOI employees developed and followed a process for modifying the boundaries of the GSENM and several other monuments. We found no evidence that Noel influenced the DOI's proposed revisions to the GSENM boundaries, that Zinke or other DOI staff involved in the project were aware of Noel's financial interest in the revised boundaries, or that they gave Noel any preferential treatment in the resulting proposed boundaries.

We are referring the attached report of investigation to your office for any action deemed appropriate. Please provide us with a written response to the report and complete the attached Accountability Form within 90 days of the date of this memorandum. You may either email your response to doioigreferrals@doioig.gov, or mail it to:

Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Interior
381 Elden Street, Suite 3000
Herndon, VA 20170

We intend to provide Congress the results of this investigation, in redacted or summary form, no sooner than 31 days from the date of this memorandum, then publish it on our website the next business day after the congressional release. Within the next 10 business days, a representative from our Office of Investigations will contact you, or your designee, to discuss our

report, the status of your response, and the method we intend to use to publish our investigative results. If you have questions during your review, please contact Matthew Elliott, Assistant Inspector General, Office of Investigations, at 202-208-5745.

Attachments (2)